

Appn. No.: 10/520,247
Amendment Dated June 16, 2005

FKC-106US

Amendments to the Claims: This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for handling objects, each object having an aperture therein defining a rim, the apparatus comprising a first set of jaws configured to move towards and away from one another, a second set of jaws configured to move towards and away from one another, the second set of jaws providing a support on which, in use, one or more objects may be stacked, or unloaded from; an arm said first set of jaws being located adjacent the support second set of jaws such that, in use, said first set of jaws and said second set of jaws are configured to pass through said aperture; and control circuitry adapted to effect means for effecting extension of the arm first set of jaws through the aperture of at least one of the objects, displacement of the arm first set of jaws away from another into engagement with the rim of the at least one object, retraction of the arm first set of jaws away from one and another such as to position the rim over the support second set of jaws, and displacement of the arm such that the rim is engaged by the support first set of jaws towards each other; and means for actuating the second set of jaws away from one another into engagement with said rim, and for actuating the second set of jaws towards each other.
2. (Currently Amended) An object handling apparatus according to claim 1 in which the arm and the support first and second set of jaws are elongate, and are substantially parallel to one another.
3. (Currently Amended) An object handling apparatus according to claim 1 or 2 wherein the arm first set of jaws is provided with a plurality of indentations spaced apart along a length thereof.
4. (Currently Amended) An object handling apparatus according to claim 3-1 wherein the support is provided with a plurality of indentations spaced apart along the length thereof.
5. (Currently Amended) An object handling apparatus according to claim 1 or 2 wherein the apparatus is provided with a sensor which is adapted to detect when a preset number of objects have been stacked on the support.

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6. - 8. (Cancelled)

9. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ In an apparatus as claimed in claim 1, a method of handling objects, each object having an aperture therein defining a rim, the method comprising the steps of providing an apparatus according to claim 1; extending the arm first set of jaws through the aperture of at least one of the objects; displacing the arm first set of jaws away from one another into engagement with the rim of the at least one object; retracting the arm first set of jaws such as to position the rim over the support second set of jaws; and displacing the arm such that the rim is engaged by the support displacing the second set of jaws away from one another to engage the rim; and displacing the first set of jaws towards one another.

10. - 13. (Cancelled)

14. (New) A object handling apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said first set of jaws are configured to move towards and away from one another in a direction that is substantially perpendicular to the direction in which said second set of jaws are configured to move towards and away from one another.

15. (New) A method according to claim 9, in which the first set of jaws are configured to move through the aperture along a first axis, and are configured to move towards and away from one another along a second axis, the first and second axes being substantially perpendicular with one another.

16. A method according to claim 15, in which said second set of jaws are configured to move towards and away from one another along a third axis that is substantially perpendicular to said first axis and said second axis.